COLONEL DONALD G. COOK, USMC

Colonel Donald G. COOK, USMC was born in Brooklyn, New York on 9 August 1934, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter F. Cook. An exceptional athlete who excelled at football in both high school and college, Colonel COOK graduated from Xavier High School in New York City in June of 1952 and continued his education at Saint Michaels College in Winooski, Vermont. He was granted a Bachelor of Arts degree in June of 1956 having majored in sociology with a minor in French and German. Following his graduation from Saint Michaels, Colonel COOK enlisted in the USMC Officer Candidate Program on 8 August 1956. On 1 December 1956 he and the former Miss Laurette A. Giroux were married in Saint Anthony's Church, Burlington, Vermont. Following their marriage, Colonel COOK attended Officer Candidate School, Quantico, Virginia, from 7 January to 22 March 1957. On 1 April 1957, Colonel COOK was commissioned in the USMCR and assigned to Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California. What followed was a distinguished military career which included graduating second in his class at the Chinese Mandarin Language Course, U. S. Army Language School, Presidio of Monterey, California, in May 1961, graduating first in his class at the Intelligence Staff Officers' Course, U. S. Army Intelligence School, Fort Holabird, Baltimore, Maryland, 2 September 1961, and service as Officer-In-Charge of the Intelligence Team and Assistant G-2 and Plans Officer, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, from September 1961 to July 1964. Upon completion of this assignment, Colonel COOK received orders to the Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. He returned his family to Vermont and reported to his new duty assignment in August 1964. On 31 December 1964, while serving as an advisor to a Vietnamese Marine Battalion participating in an operation against Viet Cong forces in the vicinity of Binh Gia, Phuoc Tuy Province, Republic of Vietnam, Colonel COOK was captured. He was reported to have died from malaria on 8 December 1967 while in captivity. An official determination of Colonel COOK's death was made on 26 February 1980.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, the decorations of this valiant Marine include:

- The Purple Heart with Gold Star in lieu of 2nd Award
- The Combat Action Ribbon
- The National Defense Service Medal
- The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
- The Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation with Cross of Gallantry
- The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Colonel COOK is survived by his beloved wife, Laurette, their children J. Christopher, Karen Marie, Victoria Marie and W. Thomas, his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Walter F. Cook, his sister, Mrs. Irene Coleman and his grandmother, Mrs. Irene Mahoney.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13

OFFICIAL PARTY

The Honorable Edward Hidalgo
Secretary of the Navy

General Robert H. Barrow, USMC
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Captain George E. Evans, CHC, USNR
Chaplain of the United States Marine Corps

Music by the United States Marine Corps Band
Honor Guard from the United States Marine Ceremonial Guard

Medal of Honor Presentation
by
Edward Hidalgo
Secretary of the Navy
to
Donald G. Cook
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
(Posthumous)

Hall of Heroes
The Pentagon

May 16, 1980
1130

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

COLONEL DONALD G. COOK
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while interned as a Prisoner of War by the Viet Cong in the Republic of Vietnam during the period 31 December 1964 to 8 December 1967. Despite the fact that by so doing he knew he would bring about harsher treatment for himself, Colonel (then Captain) Cook established himself as the senior prisoner, even though in actuality he was not. Repeatedly assuming more than his share of the manual labor in order that the other Prisoners of War could improve the state of their health, Colonel Cook willingly and unselfishly put the interests of his comrades before that of his own well-being and, eventually, his life. Giving more needy men his medicine and drug allowance while constantly nursing them, he risked infection from contagious diseases while in a rapidly deteriorating state of health. This unselfish and exemplary conduct, coupled with his refusal to stray even the slightest from the Code of Conduct, earned him the deepest respect from not only his fellow prisoners, but his captors as well. Rather than negotiate for his own release or better treatment, he steadfastly frustrated attempts by the Viet Cong to break his indomitable spirit, and passed this same resolve on to the men whose well-being he so closely associated himself. Knowing his refusals would prevent his release prior to the end of the war, and also knowing his chances for prolonged survival would be small in the event of continued refusal, he chose nevertheless to adhere to a Code of Conduct far above that which could be expected. His personal valor and exceptional spirit of loyalty in the face of almost certain death reflected the highest credit upon Colonel Cook, the Marine Corps, and the United States Naval Service.

PROGRAM

1130 Official Party arrives

The National Anthem

Remarks by the Secretary of the Navy

Reading of Citation for Medal of Honor

Presentation of Medal of Honor

Benediction

Marine Corps Hymn